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ABSTRACT

In-depth interviews were conducted with 7 second-generation Indian American students between 17 and 21 years of age to study their ethnic identity formation. Respondents were college students who came from families that represented the earlier waves of post-1965 Indian immigrants, highly educated middle- and upper-class professionals. The interviews were preceded by a survey of 48 Boston (Massachusetts) area college students to develop information about issues related to ethnic identity. As visible minorities, many second-generation Indian Americans find the ascription of ethnic identity by others to be an important factor that constrains options for identification. Others are mistaken for members of other ethnic groups, making the subjectivity of ethnic identification particularly relevant to them. Regional and religious identities may promote or conflict with Indian identity. Family expectations and gender role ideals also may sharpen the experience of being culturally different for second-generation adolescents. This exploratory study suggests that ethnic identity is dynamic and complex for Indian American adolescents. Suppressing or enacting cultural schemas in different contexts is just one strategy that may be used by second-generation adolescents in response to complex sets of pressures. They must negotiate an array of social identities, many of which can be considered ethnic. Appendixes contain the interview guide and two illustrative schema-maps of identity. (Contains 47 references.) (SLD)

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by
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Introduction:

The identifications of second-generation Indian Americans who are on the threshold of adulthood will have a vital impact on the future of Indian American communities (I use "second generation" to refer to the children of immigrants who are U.S.-born or who arrived here in early childhood). The demographic changes in the American population and increasing ethnic diversity among students in schools and in higher education call for attention to the experiences of this growing population (Edmonston and Passel, 1994). Indian Americans are a particularly interesting case to examine in light of current debates about immigrant and second-generation acculturation, because of their unique combination of characteristics such as class status, educational qualifications, geographic dispersal, language fluency, intra-group diversity, and phenotypic features.

The most notable wave of Indian immigrants, except for the earlier Punjabi[1] immigrants to California, are the post-1965 immigrants whose children are now reaching adolescence or young adulthood (Helweg & Helweg, 1990). While there has been some research on the Californian immigrant communities (Gibson, 1988; Leonard, 1992), the children of post-1965 immigrants have hardly been studied. My research aims to fill this gap, synthesizing relevant perspectives from anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

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[1]Punjab is a state in North India. The first significant migration of Indians to North America was in the early twentieth century, when Punjabi men (most from the Sikh religion) were recruited as cheap labor by lumber mills in British Columbia and Washington, and farms in California (Helweg & Helweg, 1990; Leonard, 1992; Mazumdar, 1982).

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There are very few studies that address the experiential process of ethnic identity development in the second generation; most developmental theories of ethnic identity are based on stage models or typologies that lock individuals into identification categories and underemphasize the importance of context (for example: Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Sue & Sue, 1971, cited in Sue & Morishima, 1982). I view ethnic identity development as an ongoing, dynamic process that involves individual subjectivity and agency and that is, at the same time, constrained by political, economic, and historical contexts.

A central question driving my research is: how do second-generation adolescents navigate worlds that represent different cultural ideals and practices? This paper will examine strategies used by adolescents to negotiate discrepancies in cultural beliefs and practices in different social contexts, such as school/college and home. Rather than an exclusive emphasis on bicultural identity as inevitably conflictual, I wish to present a broader, more complex view of multiple, hybrid identities.

Late adolescence is an important period in which to examine ethnic identity development, for adolescence has traditionally been considered a crucial period for identity formation (Erikson, 1959). Ethnic identity socialization and development begins in childhood and continues through the life-cycle (Allport, 1954; De Vos, 1982; Matute-Bianchi, 1991; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987; Waters, 1990). However ethnic identity may be highlighted in adolescence due to new contexts and new questions regarding identity. Studies of second-generation Indian Americans and white Americans indicate that many individuals experience shifts in their ethnic identifications in late adolescence/young adulthood, partly due to their moving away from families and entering new, sometimes more diverse, communities (Agarwal, 1991; Waters, 1990). Maitrayee, a twenty year old female who grew up in New Orleans, reflects: "I guess it wasn't until I got to college where the community, here, in Boston itself is so huge that I started thinking, Well, wow, it would be kind of cool to keep my

Indian heritage and stuff like that." During adolescence, awareness of ethnic identity may also be sharpened by other developmental changes such as increased cognitive abilities and greater concern with social life (Phinney, 1989).

Moreover, classic conceptions of adolescence in American psychology that stress increasing individuation and disengagement from the family as central to this rite of passage are not necessarily emphasized in traditional expectations of adolescents in Indian families. While I do not focus here on examining the cultural specificity of developmental narratives, continuities and discontinuities in the cultural ideals associated with different contexts, such as family, school, and peer group, are a key factor in ethnic identity development. My question is partially prompted by my personal experience of emigrating to the United States from India at the age of seventeen, with the subsequent arrival of my parents two years later. While I do not have the experiential knowledge of growing up as the child of immigrants, I too have access to at least two very different epistemic realities.

Profile of research population: Post-1965 Indian Americans

Given the paucity of demographic information on second generation Indian Americans, the following account briefly summarizes some of the characteristics of the first generation that shape the ethnic identities of their children. The new immigration laws of 1965 preferentially selected early waves of immigrants who were highly educated, skilled professionals and who acquired middle to upper middle class status in the United States in a relatively short time (Agarwal, 1991; Helweg & Helweg, 1990). Not only did the "new immigrants" have a high median income ($24,990 in 1980), but they were fluent in English, unlike many other Asian or Latino immigrants. According to one estimate, there were approximately 815,500 Indians in the United States in 1990 (Hing, 1993). After the mid-1970s, there has been a later wave of non-professional Indian immigrants to the U.S., including immigrants entering family reunification

categories (Hing, 1993). The majority of Indian immigrants are in metropolitan areas in California, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, and Texas (Fernandez & Liu, 1989). In general, Indian Americans are more evenly distributed than other Asian American groups (Bhardwaj & Rao, 1990). Patterns of spatial distribution of Indian Americans are significant because they determine second-generation adolescents' exposure to other Indian Americans and opportunities for involvement in ethnic institutions, which in turn influence their ethnic identification.

Major definitions and paradigms of ethnic identity:

There are varying definitions of ethnic identity in the social science literature. Traditional sociological perspectives define ethnic groups as minority or majority groups whose members are perceived, by themselves or others, to have a distinct sense of difference due to a common origin and culture (Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Yinger, 1994). While earlier perspectives associate ethnic identity with a fixed set of biological traits, recent frameworks emphasize the situational, inventive nature of ethnic identity, which is considered one among many options for identification (Royce, 1982; Wallman, 1993; Waters, 1990). My perspective is aligned with the contemporary view, while acknowledging that identity options are circumscribed by individuals' needs for some degree of consistency as well as by larger socio-political constraints.

Current sociological research on second-generation adolescents finds that ethnic identification is segmental (Gans, 1992; Portes and Zhou, 1992; Rumbaut, 1994; Waters, 1994), suggesting that different groups of second-generation members acculturate to different sub-cultures in American society. A host of contextual factors, including class background, exposure to racism, and contact with other ethnic groups combine in different ways to influence identification with the family's ethnic group and/or with other ethnic sub-cultures.

Methodology

My findings are drawn from an exploratory pilot study that is part of an ongoing research project. I did in-depth interviews with seven second-generation Indian Americans, three males and four females, who were between seventeen and twenty-one years of age. These were college students in the Boston area whom I contacted through student organizations and personal acquaintances. My respondents came from families that represented the earlier waves of post-1965 Indian immigrants who are highly educated, middle to upper-middle class professionals. The interviews were open-ended and approximately one-and-a-half hours long, and I also did a follow-up interview with one of the respondents (see the interview guide in appendix A for a list of major topics that were addressed in the interviews). Transcribing the interviews myself allowed me to reflect on the pauses and expressive shifts in the interviewee's speech and my own, and their implications for the topics being discussed. The interviewees received copies of their own interview transcripts to allow them to read and comment on the transcripts and to facilitate a more emic perspective.

The findings from the pilot interviews helped shape my theoretical framework, in the tradition of grounded theory which emphasizes that theoretical concepts must be discovered by examining the data and conclusions should in turn "feed back to give theoretical control over formulations" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 5). Situational, interactionist perspectives on ethnic identity suggest that interviewees will present ethnic identifications partially in response to the interview context, their relationship to the interviewer, and the way the questions are formulated (Briggs, 1986; Mishler, 1986). During the interviews and data analysis, I was aware that the interview narratives may have been influenced by my gender, ethnic identity, and my own immigrant history which makes me a partial "insider" and "outsider" to second-generation experiences. It is illuminating to know how an individual would define or present her or his ethnic identity in such an interaction and the kinds of experiences or attitudes she or he may

choose to emphasize. The intensive interview format proved very effective in eliciting nuanced, complex accounts of ethnic identity development.

In the first and second close readings of each interview transcript, I did a preliminary, open-ended coding of the topics addressed in each passage in the text (Strauss, A., 1987); for example, some codes used in the pilot study were: conflict in parent-child relationship ideals, and self-expressed shift in ethnic identification. I also did a comparative reading of the interview texts for axial coding, noting the dimensions that connected passages within and across interview texts that could be developed into broader themes (Strauss, A., 1987). For example, two themes that emerged in the pilot interviews and that helped shape my theoretical framework were: the construction of identity in interaction with specific others, and ethnic identity strategies specific to family, school, and college contexts.

The analysis was deepened by considering particular contexts that are associated with specific cultural ideals and that promote or conflict with certain ethnic identifications. I noted incidents and settings that marked transitions in identity development and the relationships between different identity schemas. The account was further layered by noting intersections between ethnic identity and other dimensions such as racial identity, gender, class, and religion. To help capture the complexity of these interrelationships, I found it helpful to visualize the identity schemas referred to by each interviewee by mapping them diagrammatically and noting what factors contributed to or undermined each schema and how different schemas related to one another (see illustrative schema-maps in appendix B).

In the early phases of the development of my research question, and as part of a collaborative research project with two other graduate students, I did a survey of forty-nine college students from five Boston area colleges and universities. The questionnaire did not directly ask respondents about their responses to cultural dissonance, but was designed to document a range of specific experiences and attitudes pertaining to ethnic

identification, including (dis)/agreement with parents on certain issues. We also held a focus group discussion with three survey respondents, two males and one female, who volunteered to participate. In addition, I kept field notes to record observations of student events and activities which I attended as participant/researcher, such as South Asian student organization meetings at Harvard College, community service projects, and cultural events.

Rather than present my conceptual framework and pilot study findings separately in this paper, I weave them together in the following discussion since this is a small, exploratory study that has helped shape my theoretical formulations. Integrating my findings and emerging conceptual framework also reflects the dialectical relationship between theory and data in ethnographic and grounded theory traditions of qualitative research.

Second-Generation Ethnic Identity: Framework and Findings

Since existing theory and research do not adequately address the identity development of Indian Americans, my aim is to develop a framework that can be tested in further research. Given that my pilot study was based on a v ery small number of subjects drawn from a specific setting, my findings are not generalizable to other Indian Americans; however, insights from these interviews and from previous research have resonated with the experiences of other second-generation Indian American adolescents with whom I have talked and have helped guide my ongoing research. The framework presented below integrates three major dimensions of second-generation ethnic identity: cognitive and situational dimensions, symbolic/interactionist features, and the multiplicity of identities. Each of these dimensions emerged from the pilot interviews and together, these features will help to analyze and interpret future interview data. The central concept is that of "schemas," which captures particularly well the cognitive and situational nature of ethnic identity. This framework has not been applied to ethnic

identity thus far but is particularly useful in understanding the ways in which different cultural worlds are negotiated.

i. Cognitive and situational dimensions

D'Andrade's (1992) concept of "goal-schemas" addresses the cognitive processes involved in the internalization and commitment to ethnic identities in specific situations. He suggests that all individuals have multiple goal-schemas or reality-defining systems that provide information about what states should be pursued. Schemas are hierarchically organized, with different schemas internalized to varying degrees. This view allows for competing cultural meaning systems influencing a second-generation adolescent, thus normalizing the existence of multiple identifications rather than regarding biculturalism or multiculturalism as problematic.

D'Andrade (1984) proposes that certain elements of cultural meaning systems are intrinsically rewarding goals, for they may represent the "good" self. Not fulfilling these goals may produce anxiety for the individual. For example, Anita, a twenty-year old Indian American, said she perceived her parents' value system as opposed to that of her white American friends. She recalled her parents' view: "It was always, 'That's wrong. The way we're doing it is right. That's wrong.'"

Some second-generation adolescents report a situational ethnic identification in response to cultural discrepancies; they use Indian patterns of behavior, food, clothes, and languages at home and switch to more "mainstream"—white middle-class American—cultural norms at school or with peers. Ethnic identity development takes place in different "life domains," such as family, school, and community, and involves different adaptive responses in specific social and cultural contexts (Kim and Hurh, 1993; Ramirez, 1984). Prakash, an eighteen year old Indian-American male, observed:

> I think [the term bicultural] it's pretty fitting for, definitely for, Indian American youth, there's definitely you know, you're a certain way in school and you're a certain way at home and you have your jeans and

> sneakers on in school and you come home, you dress in *kurta pajama* [Indian male dress], and it's a very distinct difference.

For Prakash, changing daily from symbols of private and public identities did not appear problematic because it was mirrored in the experiences of his parents and their Indian friends, but this may not be the case for adolescents whose families do not belong to an ethnic social network or who do not switch cultural styles. Some adolescents may have to keep certain situational identities rigidly separate, and sometimes, hidden. Adolescents may enact both cultural schemas, of peer group and of family, in different contexts, and not disclose the behavior deemed inappropriate to their family. Gibson (1988) reports that some Punjabi girls in California say that they are criticized by their peers for not "dressing American," and are reprimanded by parents for wearing Westernized clothes or makeup. One adolescent observes that the only option available to her is to hide her "Americanized" self, as symbolized in fashion, from her parents; she dons makeup on the way to school and misses classes in order to be with her friends.

Ethnic identity development is also influenced by experiences with peers or authority figures in school and at home (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1977). Steinberg (1981) comments that "more than any other single factor, public schools undermined the capacity of immigrant groups to transmit native cultures to American-born children." Second-generation Indian Americans generally participate in a mainstream educational system that often socializes them into different cultural meaning systems from those of the family. Today, mass media is also an important agent of socialization into American cultural ideals. Gibson's (1988) study illustrates some of the cultural discontinuities relevant to the children of Punjabi immigrants in California. While messages conveyed by school and media contain themes of independence and freedom for both male and female adolescents, Sikh parents encourage self-reliance bounded by family relations and emphasize that the family's self-respect, or *izzat*, depends on an

individual's actions, particularly those of daughters. School and peer influences are important factors in the development of ethnic identities for second-generation members, who may respond with situational or other strategies depending on parental and peer attitudes. Whether or not peer influence overshadows family socialization efforts for Indian Americans depends on the ethnic composition of the school and community, and the family's involvement in ethnic organizations and social networks. Yet the question still remains: how does an individual integrate identities enacted in different contexts?

It is possible that the particular identities triggered in varying contexts may be very different, but at a more general level of personality across situations, individuals may develop a consistent style of switching cultural identities. Balancing different cultural worlds does not imply there can be no predictability to individual personality or that second-generation adolescents are inevitably conflict-ridden chameleons. Individuals can respond flexibly and creatively to multiple cultural models available by creating a particular combination of responses that represent a "compromise" solution to conflicting demands (Quinn and Strauss, 1993). Yet a compromise solution may not be easy for second-generation Indian-Americans for they may risk not being fully accepted in different spheres of life, for example, school, peer group, and family. However, developmental changes and new social contexts may allow some adolescents to synthesize different cultural identities. In college, Prakash's definition of biculturalism based on switching lifestyles no longer applied to a context in which "home" and "school" had essentially merged: "But in college there's not that clear distinction, so the whole term bicultural sort breaks down for me I think. It's more like, synthesis of cultures."

It is inspiring to note Mageo's (1995) perspective that goes beyond a simple dichotomy between integrity and flux in models of the self, which she defines phenomenologically as the "experience . . . of being a person" (pp. 282-283). She argues

that there is a "dialogic cohesiveness" unifying the dimensions of self highlighted in the "ontological premises" of a particular culture, as well as the elements of self that appear to be excluded from those premises. Applying this dialectical perspective to the ethnic identity of individuals, it is possible to conceive of individuals as having a dialogically cohesive identity, wherein contradictory cultural schemas are not a sign of a fragmentation but rather are part of the total repertoire of identities available to individuals who enact different cultural self-schemas. Rather than privileging either consistency or flux, this perspective would reconfigure the notion of an integrated identity to include the multiple, sometimes conflicting, cultural self-schemas into which second-generation adolescents are socialized. The dialectical relationship among elements of identity is also located in, and shaped by, the constraints of social and structural contexts.

ii. Symbolic interactionist features

Schema-theory is based on a cognitive perspective that does not dichotomize "thought" and "feeling" (Strauss, C., 1992), which makes it relevant to studying a phenomenon such as ethnic identity that has rational and irrational, instrumental and expressive components, both of which are equally important. Symbolic interactionist perspectives emphasize the subjective evaluations that define ethnic boundaries and view ethnic identity as the result of self-ascription and identification by others (Barth, 1969). For example, Prakash recalls a key turning point in the development of his ethnic identity schemas:

> After my first year in college, I went to India, I was perceived as American by the way I talked and acted and so it definitely, like, brought home that there was a bicultural-ness about me, and ... not until I went there when ... Indians, real [sic] Indians saw me as American, I started to see myself as American.

This view is very relevant to second-generation Indian Americans for, as visible minorities, the ascription of ethnic identity by others is an important factor that

constrains options for identification and for "passing" as members of the dominant group. However Indian Americans are not always easily classifiable in the eyes of non-South Asians and are often mistaken for members of other ethnic groups, making an interactionist perspective particularly relevant. Sheila, an eighteen year old interviewee, recalls how she was ethnically misidentified by school teachers, thus eliciting ethnic stereotypes that affected her self-perception:

> If they didn't know that I was Indian, they thought I was Hispanic, they thought I was Black or something, they'd be like, treat me so differently than if they knew I was Indian. I don't know, especially in one math class, like, this teacher thought I was Hispanic for a long time and she really like made me feel stupid and I couldn't learn this calculus or whatever, and then somehow she, like, realized that I was Indian and all of a sudden I was supposed to be like the best math student in the world.

The subjectivity inherent in ethnic identification is invoked not only in social interactions but also in the construction of ethnic identity by individuals. The use of subjective features of ethnic identity in later generations and the interest in ethnic identification in adolescence is explained by the notion of "symbolic ethnicity" (Gans, 1979). According to this theory, ethnic identity needs for second- and third-generation individuals are largely symbolic and expressed through enacting rituals or displaying symbols. Some aspects of symbolic ethnicity applicable to second-generation Indian Americans are the use of traditional ethnic food, music, dance, and other forms of popular culture, and involvement in ethnic political issues or interest groups. Ahmed, a twenty-year old interviewee, recalls his first year in college and his involvement in the undergraduate South Asian Association: "That was almost a new journey into self, you know, learning about myself as well as kind of expressing my cultural interests."

This symbolic expression of ethnic identity arises from the particular experience of cultural identity in the second generation. Roosens (1989, p. 150), who has studied second-generation Moroccan and Italian children in Belgium, points out that "to see and use one's culture as a right [or consciously]," one must first gain distance from that

culture, by questioning it or being questioned by "forced acculturation." Second-generation children are forced to gain a critical perspective on cultural differences, partly due to participation in educational systems which distances them from their parents' culture. Inspite of this distance, children may still wish to preserve their family's cultural and ethnic identity. For example, in an interview I conducted, Manjali, a twenty-one year old female who has recently taken classes in Indian religion says, provocatively but insightfully:

> When I was thinking about my perceptions of Vedic [ancient Hindu] literature, I'm like, these people are priests, like, the Vedic dudes are just out of control . . . is this because I've grown up in this culture and my perceptions are colored by this culture that I think these Vedic people are freaks, or does everybody think that the Vedic people are freaks? . . . or it is it that my exposure to this Western stuff has been so pro-[Western philosophy]?

Yet she also comments:

> So those classes have been really cool, and I think that's what's gotten me into more Indian stuff, in general, because I look at it from a cultural and more, I think, academic perspective ? You know, because this is something I'm interested in, would like to pursue at an academic level. . .

Manjali's comments illustrate the "conscious," reflexive critique of ancestral cultures that Roosens describes. She may have had a more intuitive, rather than primarily academic, understanding of Hinduism had she grown up in India, even though it is not necessary that Indians today have an automatic understanding of ancient texts. Yet it is clear that one of the expressions of her Indian identity is Manjali's deliberate effort to learn about Hindu philosophy by enrolling in a course, and her ethnic identity has intellectual, in addition to emotional, significance for her.

The need for ethnic identification cannot be explained without looking at emotional factors that make symbolic ethnicity a powerful motivation. An aspect of symbolic ethnicity that applies to Manjali, and three other Indian American college students in the pilot study, is the desire to return to the ancestral country, to go back to one's "roots." This desire stems from many layers of experience, many of them imbued

with emotional significance, such as desires to be know first hand the culture in which one's parents grew up, to learn more about family history, to feel a sense of cultural belonging, and to resolve conflicting identity issues. This psychological or geographic return to the ancestral country in the second generation is likened to a "second migration" (Leman, 1982, cited in Roosens, 1989).

iii. Multiplicity of Identities

Ethnic identity for the second generation has many layers, reflecting the complex, overlapping social identities of Indian immigrants (Fisher, 1980). There is great diversity within Indian immigrant communities, which represent seven major religions, 33 major languages, and six primary regional subcultures (Agarwal, 1991). Fisher observes that Indian Americans are actually an "ethnic group composed of ethnic groups," making multiple ethnic identities a noteworthy feature for second-generation Indian Americans. Interview data indicates that their ethnic identity schemas may include regional, linguistic, second-generation, South Asian, Asian American, and racial identities, some of which are shared across ethnic groups, as in the case of common second-generation issues and pan-ethnic labels. Other schemas that are not specifically ethnic, but may intersect with ethnic identity, include those of religion, class, gender, and sexual orientation. As a result of the Indian diaspora, the children of twice- or third-migrated Indian immigrants have access to multiple national identifications, for example, Indo-African or Indo-Caribbean American. Each of these schemas may conflict with or strengthen Indian American identity, depending on the interaction of individual development with contextual factors.

These identity-schemas are hierarchically organized, the most salient schemas being the ones imbued with emotional, not just cognitive, significance (D'Andrade, 1992). My pilot study suggests that the tensions between particular ethnic-identity schemas are laced with the emotional and symbolic meanings of relationships

associated with those schemas. Each of these identity-schemas may conflict with or strengthen Indian American identity, depending on the interaction of individual development with contextual factors (see appendices B1 and B2). Drawing on schemas highlighted in my pilot interviews, I will touch briefly on the ways regional identity, religion, and gender schemas form an intricate relationship with one another and with Indian identity.

Regional and linguistic identity: Indian immigrants often succeed in reproducing regional ethnic boundaries and, to some extent, transmitting regional stereotypes to the second generation. Maitrayee, whose family is from Bihar, recalls:

> I remember when I was little my mom would, you know, not joke around or anything, but she would say something like, 'Oh, she's Gujarati, of course she's _____ [inaudible]' . . . we had some very good Punjabi friends, my mom would always say, Oh you know, Auntie's *pukka* [absolutely] Punjabi. . . based on these, on my parents, and when I came to college, I met students, I thought, 'Okay, she must be Punjabi, she's Gujarati,' . . . even in the kids, I think to a certain extent, you can definitely tell, who's what, and where their parents are supposed to be from.

Regional identity may or may not support Indian American affiliation, depending on the the separation of regional and pan-Indian ethnicity in the family and community. Second-generation adolescents' identification with regional ethnic groups may reflect the involvement of their parents in regional group organizations and social networks. Manjali's Bengali identity developed largely in opposition to Indian identity in childhood, supported by her family's strong Bengali networks and maintained by her parents' regional prejudices and expectations of marrying within the Bengali community. Maitrayee sheds light on the institutionalization of regional ethnic boundaries, recalling the hidden agenda at a conference held in Chicago for Khayas Biharis, a regional caste sub-group: "We get there, and all these other kids are, like, our age, twenty-one, twenty-two, a little bit younger, a little bit older. And, um, they were seriously looking for wives or husbands."

At the other end of the continuum of salience of regional ethnic identity, there are second-generation Indian Americans for whom these origins have little meaning or relevance. Kothari (1995), a second-generation Indian American writer, observes:

> When an Indian person asks, "Where are you from?" whatever answer I give is full of connotations . . . to that person that I, since I am not in the thick of Indian popular culture, or even Indian American culture, barely understand. When I say, "My mother is Punjabi and my father's Gujerati," I am identified in terms that I don't understand.
> (p. 157).

An important component of regional ethnic identity is regional language preference or fluency, for in general, language is a vital basis of ethnic identity. Many Indian American adolescents, including those in my pilot study, report enrolling in Indian language classes in college, reflecting their increased interest in exploring their ethnic identity (Agarwal, 1991).

Religious identity: As is the case with regional identity, religious affiliation may promote or conflict with Indian identity, depending on numerous factors. Adolescents' experience of ethnic identity may differ if they identify as Hindu or as a member of an Indian religious minority group, and in the context of a predominantly Christian society, if they identify as a religious minority. For example, Ahmed observes that his "bi-toned" ethnic-religious identity mirrors that of his parents, who feel a sense of pride and patriotism at "general" Indian gatherings but consider themselves "Muslim first" in predominantly Muslim contexts. Both identities are "very important" to him, but there is "a distinction between culture and religion that constantly holds." For Ahmed and his family, this distinction seems to have developed partly in response to the division in the community along religious lines that was also reflected in the predominantly Hindu character of the local Indian American organization.

Ahmed's observations illustrate how the relationship of national ethnic identity to religious identity is shaped by the acceptance of the religious group in the community and the religious stance of Indian American organizations, that is, whether

they are secular or identified with particular religions. His comments also indicate that socialization of religious identity depends on whether family social networks are primarily defined by religious affiliation or national identity. As a result of these factors, religious and ethnic identities may interact with each other situationally, with one or other assuming greater salience depending on the particular context.

In college, religious identity has become more salient for Ahmed and other interviewees, due to a heightened sense of being a minority, an increasing exploration of identity issues, and the opportunity to learn about religion in an academic setting. For Manjali, taking classes in Indian religion is linked to the strengthening of her Indian identity in college:

> A lot of my rediscovery of my Indianness or identity has sort of been ... understanding Hinduism and being able to explain it, because when you grow up in a Christian country which America is soo Christian, . . . So, I . . . didn't have any way to explain the little rituals or the mantras my mother would recite every once in a while, I had no way to relate that to Hinduism as the philosophy that I'd read about . . . it wasn't until I took Diana [Eck]'s class that I understood.

It was only in college that Manjali's Indian, and Hindu, identity became as important to her as her regional Bengali ethnic identity, which was her most salient ethnic identity schema in childhood.

Gender: Family expectations and gender role ideals may sharpen the experience of being culturally "different" for second-generation adolescents. Young women may receive conflicting expectations from parents regarding femininity and mainstream success, that may be perceived as extremely difficult to reconcile. A twenty-one year old woman interviewed by Agarwal (1991) voiced her frustrations: "So much is expected of us. We are expected to excel in schools and careers and still be demure and delicate, good mothers, wives, and daughter-in-laws." Across South Asian immigrant groups, daughters are often considered "the repository of the *izzat* of the family" (Wakil, Siddique, and Wakil, 1981).

According to some researchers (Agarwal, 1991; Hossain, 1982; Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981), the first generation attempts to reproduce sex stereotyped roles with which they grew up in India, while in other cases, migration to a new cultural and economic context may force immigrants to shift to less traditional gender roles in the family (Bhachu, 1988). Mani (1993) emphasizes that, either way, women are "made responsible . . . for upholding tradition" and are "particularly vulnerable. Caught between parental desire for conformity with cultural norms that are at odds with their peers' and their own often uneasy integration into U. S. society, many second-generation women find themselves literally struggling to know their place and identity" (p. 35). This cultural dissonance often differentially affects males and females in the second generation, complicating issues of relationships and marriage. Maitrayee, commenting on her perceptions of second-generation Indian American males, says, "When you meet guys, they're, 'You know, I kind of want to my wife to be like my mom and stay at home and not do anything.' You're like, 'Well, who am I supposed to marry then?' "

Research underscores that parents have more conservative standards for daughters than for sons with regard to dating and pre-marital relationships (Agarwal, 1991; Gibson, 1988; Mani, 1993). The tightening of control over daughters' sexuality may be in response not only to developmental issues, such as the desire for greater independence in adolescence in an American context, but also to immigrant parents' own issues of cultural identity preservation. Mani (1993, p. 34) observes that "the burden of negotiating the new world is borne disproportionately by women, whose behavior and desires, real or imagined, become the litmus test for the South Asian community's anxiety or sense of well-being."

This does not imply that Indian American males do not experience any conflict with regard to gender roles. On the contrary, males may have to meet immigrant parents' expectations of pursuing a stable, prestigious occupation that may not coincide

with their own career goals. The obligation to compensate immigrant parents for their sacrifices also seems to be part of a more general "second-generation schema," as illustrated by Ahmed, who contemplates a career in journalism or teaching, and who says of his parents:

> [Their] expectations on me is, definitely, one, definitely going into medicine . . . but whatever it is, do something that is somewhat stable. Or else you'll kind of go to back to ground zero for everything we've worked for, for whatever number of years. And I feel the pressure, . . .

Both males and females may confront problematic stereotypes of Indian Americans as "exotic cultural others" or "model minority nerds" that complicate issues of dating, sexuality, and friendship in adolescence. Anita recalls:

> Well, my freshman year, there was this guy in my Italian class who was in love with me because he thought I was exotic. . . . I didn't know what to tell him.... And it's just like, "You have no clue! I grew up in Lexington, Massachusetts."

However, South Asian males are judged by different standards of desirability which, according to Ahmed, are tied to issues of economic privilege and class status. He suggests that South Asian males in his particular college culture, in order to be desirable competitors for South Asian females, have to physically resemble white males and have high social status on campus:

> The ideal, I'd say, Indian person for an Indian female on this campus, not for everyone, but for most people, is tall, um, very Caucasian features, well-dressed, I mean <u>well</u>-dressed, not just typical dress. . . but definitely, has access to social opportunities, whether it's at a finals club [elite all-male college club] or whether it's enough money to go into Boston. . . Some kind of high culture-type person, high fallutin,' I should say.

Moreover, for both males and females, exploring sexual identity and sexual orientation may not be accepted by traditional perspectives and reconciling ethnic identity with less conventional roles may be a difficult task. Shah (1993) points out that South Asian gays and lesbians in "immigrant communities" have a complex dilemma, for they are caught between their strong need for affiliation to their families and communities, and the perceptions often held by those same communities that gay

"identities are a threat to the cultural integrity of South Asian immigrants" and that homosexuality is part of "an already well defined yet adaptable arsenal of 'Western evils'" (pp. 118-119). Thus gender and sexual identity are intertwined with issues of race and class, underscoring that the development of ethnic identity in the second generation is a multilayered process embedded in specific political and cultural contexts.

Conclusion

This exploratory study suggests that ethnic identity is dynamic and complex for Indian American adolescents, involving multiple affiliations and infused with different meanings in different contexts. Suppressing or enacting cultural schemas in different contexts is just one strategy that may be used by second-generation adolescents in response to complex sets of pressures, often without any role models to provide possible directions. They may also develop hybrid cultural identities, or use a characteristic way of switching from one context to another. These strategies are used by Indian Americans to negotiate, not just one, but an array of social identities of which many can be considered ethnic. Further research is necessary not only to test these initial observations with a larger sample, but also to probe more deeply into these and other ethnic strategies and their implications for students and educators in schools and colleges. The experiences of these adolescents are necessarily as diverse and complex as the strategies they use to negotiate their ethnic identities, and will shape the evolving identities of Indian American communities.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

My interviews were open-ended in form but I kept in mind the following questions as guidelines for the issues I wanted to learn about from each interviewee. As participants share information about themselves, I sometimes share resonant stories or reflections when appropriate.

Introduction:
- Brief overview of the research project and its rationale, my background and motivation for the study.
- Obtain permission to use tape recorder and explain why recording is important (frees me for listening, allows accurate quotations, closer listening later).
- Explain that interview transcripts will be confidential and that I will use sensitivity and discretion in disguising obvious identifying information if interview is referred to in a paper, conference presentation, etc.

1. Family History and Background:
   When did your parents immigrate to the United States? Why?
   From what part of India are they from (regional ethnic group)?
   What are your parents' occupations?
   Do you have any siblings? Any relatives in the United States?
   Where did you grow up?

2. Religious identity:
   What are your parents' religious backgrounds?
   Do you believe in and/or practise any faith?
   (If the interviewee's family is not Christian):
   How do you feel about being a religious minority in the U.S.? How does that affect your sense of Indian identity? Were there other members of your religious community in the area in which you grew up? Did your family go to a temple/mosque/*gurudwara*?
   (If the interviewee's family is Christian):
   How do other Indian Americans react when they learn your family is Christian? Is it an issue in your relationship with Indian friends who aren't Christian? Did your family attend a special church service for members of your religious community in India, or a general service?
   (For interviewees whose families are Muslim/Christian/Parsi/Sikh):
   How does belonging to _____ faith make you feel about your Indian identity?

3. Language:

What language(s) do your parents speak?
What language(s) do you speak with your parents, siblings, and extended family members? How fluent are you?
Have you ever enrolled in any Indian language courses? If yes, why?

4. Community/Regional ethnic identity of family:
What was the racial and ethnic composition of the community(ies) in which you grew up? Were there any other Indian families in your town?
If so, did your family socialize with other Indian families? Did you spend time with Indian peers?
Were there any Indian cultural/religious/social organizations in your town/area? If so, did you/your family participate in them?
Were there other families from your parents' regional group in India? Did your family socialize with them? Was there a formal regional group organization?
Does a _____ (Gujarati, Punjabi, etc.) identity mean anything to? Do you associate being _____ (Gujarati, Punjabi, etc.) with any particular personal or occupational characteristics? Did your parents ever mention any regional group stereotypes to you?

5. Schooling:
What was the racial and ethnic composition of your high school?
Were there other Indian or South Asian students? If yes, how many?
What were the ethnic backgrounds of your friends, in and out of school? Did you have any Indian or South Asian friends?

6. Childhood Ethnic Identification:
Did you ever feel you were different from your non-Indian/South Asian peers? If so, how? Was there a particular incident or experience that highlighted this difference?
If you felt your experiences and views were similar to those of your non-Indian/South Asian peers, what were some of the similarities?
How did you identify yourself ethnically in childhood and adolescence?
Were there any shifts in your ethnic identification? Were these associated with particular events/contexts?

7. Visits to India:
Have you ever traveled to India? With whom did you travel?
Have you met your extended family members in India?
What was the experience of visiting India/meeting your relatives like for you?
How did Indian relatives/friends/individuals identify you ethnically/culturally?
How did you identify yourself in terms of ethnicity and nationality when you were in India?

8. Relationship with Parents:

To what extent do you agree with your parents on issues involved in questions about dating/sexual relationships/career goals/gender roles/ethnic identity/ cultural prejudice/political identity and values/religious beliefs, . . . ? (this may spiral out of topics discussed above).
Do you openly discuss these or other issues with your parents?
Is your gender a factor in your parents' views on such issues when it is related to you?
If you have conflicts with your parents on such issues, to what extent do you think it might be a generational or, specifically, a cultural gap? Do your friends or peers have similar conflicts with their parents over similar issues?
How do you negotiate any conflicts with your parents on such issues?
How have you and your parents influenced each other on issues of ethnic and cultural identity?

[Probe if appropriate: How do you feel about conflicts with your parents? How does this make you feel about your ethnic identity?]

9. College Experiences:
How ethnically/racially diverse is your college community?
What are the ethnic backgrounds of your friends? Is this different than it was in high school?
Do you belong to any ethnic student groups? If yes, why?
Do you participate in cultural/political activities of ethnic student organizations?
Have you taken any courses related to Indian religion/literature/languages?

10. Late Adolescent Ethnic and Racial Identification:
Did you experience any shifts in your ethnic identification after coming to college? If yes, were these associated with specific events/contexts?
How would you identify yourself ethnically at present?
Do you identify as South Asian? Asian American? a person of color?
Why or why not?

11. Ethnic/racial stereotypes/discrimination:
Have you ever been stereotyped because of your ethnic/racial background?
Have you ever experienced any ethnic/racial discrimination?
Are you ever ethnically mis-identified?
How have these experiences influenced your ethnic identification?

12. Dating, Sexuality, Gender Issues, Beauty Ideals:
Does your ethnic/cultural identity influence your views of dating/intimate relationships?
Is the ethnic identity of your partner or future spouse important to you? To your parents?
What do your Indian/non-Indian peers think of as an attractive/ideal partner?
Does this differ according to cultural background?

Do your Indian/non-Indian peers have any expectations of what an Indian male/female should be or look like? Does this differ by gender/ethnicity? Are their expectations realistic to you?

[Probe: Do you experience any tensions in the expectations your parents or peers have of you as an Indian American male/female? Do you think if you weren't male/female you'd think differently about your ethnic identity? How so?]

13. Career Goals:
    What do you hope to do after graduating from college?
    Do your parents support your goals? Have they ever directly or indirectly expressed expectations about your college major/choice of career?
    Does being a child of Indian immigrant parents have any relationship to your views of your future career?

14. Is there anything that we did not touch on or discuss fully in the interview? Anything that you want to clarify?

15. Would your answers to any of these questions been different had I been second-generation? male? non-Indian?

APPENDIX B1

Illustrative Schema-Map

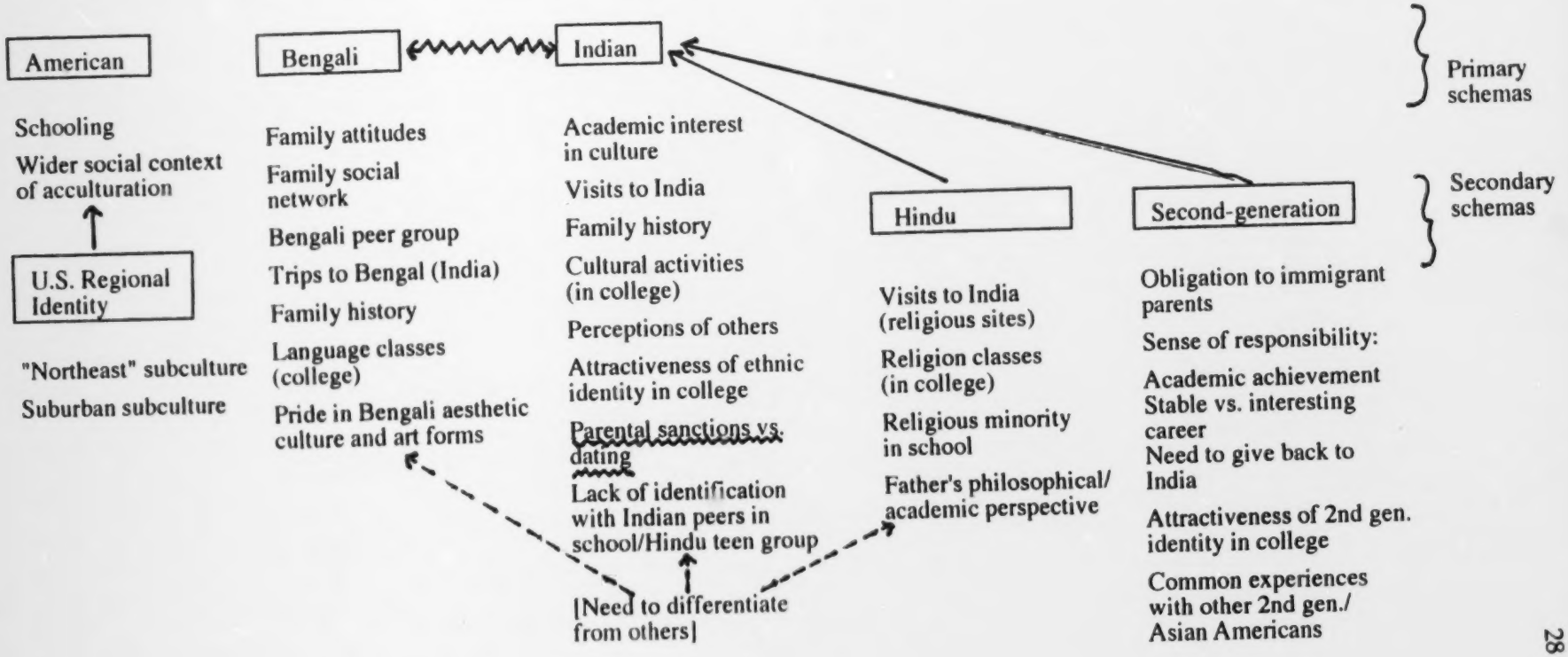
Ethnic Identity Schemas Based on "Manjali's" Interview Transcript

Key:

Schema

Conflict within or between schemas

MANJALI



Peer conformity (School)<——IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OVER LIFE CYCLE——> Individuation (College)

Monocultural education <——HISTORICAL CONTEXT——> Multicultural education

APPENDIX B2

Illustrative Schema-Map

Ethnic Identity Schemas Based on "Ahmed's" Interview Transcript

Key:

Schema

Conflict within or between schemas

AHMED

Muslim ⟷ Indian

Primary schemas

Family history
Desire to ensure continuity of family's Muslim identity

Parental values and attitudes: Sanctions vs. dating

Muslim social network/community

Islamic education

College peer groups: Conflict in liberal vs. conservative values (situational identity response)

Diversity of early school context vs. tokenization in Rochester high school

Cultural distinctions between Indian vs. Pakistani Muslims: "bi-toned" national vs. religious identity

Cultural/artistic activities

College student organization leadership

College peer groups: Orthodox practising Muslim vs. liberal dance instructor (situational schemas)

In-group marriage: continuity of culture, fear of losing culture

South Asian

Student organization leadership: forum for expression of beliefs

Group mobilization

Critical of S. Asian standards of beauty/ ideal dating partner

Second-generation

Secondary schemas

Obligation to immigrant parents

Sense of responsibility: Stable vs. interesting career

Person of Color

Asian American

Inter-group commonalities

Political "world-view": Pan-ethnic mobilization against discrimination

Reluctance of Indian peers to identify w. pan-ethnic/non-white labels

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Childhood <——— IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OVER LIFE CYCLE IN SPECIFIC SETTINGS ———> Predom. white high school ———> Diverse college campus

Diverse Chicago suburb
Strong Indian identity

Rochester
Indian identity suppressed

Strong Indian/South Asian identity